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The Negro's Debut In Chicago Schools

AT Emerson elementary school last week a group of educators and civic leaders met to hear a committee of school teachers and Superintendent William H. Johnson of the Board of Education make a report on a study to include in the curriculum of the public school system information concerning the contributions of Negroes to the development of Ameri[illegible] -7 1942

The study which Supt. Johnson authorized was done with painstaking and meticulous care by a conscientious committee which ascribed to colored Americans their true position in the present and past activities of the citizenry of this nation. The committee recommends as a part of the curriculum of our school a history of the Negro from the days of Pedro who piloted Columbus' Pinta to the New World in 1492, to Dr. George Washington Carver with appropriate biographies of distinguished Negroes between.

Supt. Johnson said that the material would be used throughout the city of Chicago and in all of the elementary schools. It will be introduced as a normal part of the curriculum and with the hopes of teaching pupils something about that part of the population of America that has either consistently been left out of curriculum throughout the country or whose values have been distorted and underestimated.

Our only hope is that the material be used as Dr. Johnson said it would be. We hope that every school teaches it and that he will see that it be taught in a manner complimentary to the hopes and aspirations of the committee which gathered it. If it be thus taught, Chicago will be ahead of all other large cities in the dissemination of knowledge calculated to bring about a better understanding between white people and colored people and to encourage a more wholesome attitude and a greater degree of tolerance between the younger minds of the two races before they become contaminated with racial antipathy and bigotry.

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Honor School Chief For New History Course Plan

By NAHUM D. BRASCHER

Great tribute was paid William H. Johnson, superintendent of the Chicago public schools, at a banquet given for him at the Woman's City club on Friday evening, June 12.

In honoring the superintendent, more than 300 Chicagoans, including members of the Phi Delta Kappa sorority and prominent citizens, paid tribute to Dr. Johnson's support of a plan to integrate the history of the Negro into the regulation course of history taught in all Chicago public schools, from the first through the eighth grades.

Honors at this testimonial by the national sorority were shared by Miss Elinor McCollom, principal of the Emerson school, who with others has conducted a two year study of the new history plan.

The plan provides that the history of the Negro shall be studied by school children, not as a separate course, but as it takes its chronological place in the general history of America.

Joining the Chicagoans in their tribute the persons responsible for this revolutionary trend were President and Mrs. Roosevelt, who sent cordial telegrams.

The original idea for the departure in teaching history in Chicago schools was broached by Mrs. Madeline Morgan, teacher in the Emerson school. Mrs. Morgan discussed the idea with Miss McCollom, principal, who readily made an appointment to discuss the subject with Dr. Johnson. Dr. Johnson immediately developed the plan. Mrs. Maudelle Bousfield, principal of Wendell Phillips high school, and others, speaking at the banquet, emphasized the fact that the "Study was begun long before Pearl Harbor."

In his formal address Dr. Johnson brought out the thought that the Chicago departure is part of a national and world trend for co-operative justice which he has observed across the years and miles, and as rapidly as possible is helping Chicago to the full realization of truths.

Mrs. Bousfield, in her talk stated that she feared certain sinister influences would seek to "crucify" Dr. Johnson. She urged the necessity for this new history plan in all America.

Atty. Patrick B. Prescott, who made one of the best addresses of his illustrious career, advised Dr. Johnson that "Jesus Christ was crucified, and He is remembered." Further, all men and women who have had the courage to stand for human justice, including Abraham Lincoln, said Prescott, are remembered, while those with evil purposes are forgotten.

All Chicago Represented

During the evening program, following the dinner, and singing of the National Anthem, representatives from leading Chicago organizations made brief remarks of commendation to Dr. Johnson, and those associated with him in the work.

Attorney Oscar C. Brown represented the N.A.A.C.P.; Frazier Lane, the Chicago Urban League; Samuel Stratton, Du Sable high school; Mrs. Bessie King, Betsy Ross, who with Mrs. Morgan chiefly conducted the research work; Mrs. Ruth Jackson, principal of Colman school and member of the committee; Mrs. Lois C. Mostrom, principal of Betsy Ross, member of the committee and Leo G. Herdeg, district superintendent.

Willard M. Payne, represented the Negro Chamber of Commerce and extended personal felicitations to Dr. Johnson prior to the dinner, because of another appointment. J. M. Hughes, dean of the school of education, Northwestern university, commended Dr. Johnson. The Chicago and Northern District Association of Colored Women was represented among the guests by Mrs. Fannie Baxter, president. Miss Mary Lusson represented the Board of Curriculum, Board of Education.

When Dr. Johnson was finally presented by Mrs. Oneida Cockrell, of the Rosenwald Garden apartments Nursery school, who acted as mistress of ceremonies, the entire assembly stood and gave a long applause to the superintendent.

Dr. Johnson assured the assembled guests that he has no fear of "crucifixion" and that many have come to him and declared that such procedure should have begun long ago.

However, Dr. Johnson stated, he is accustomed to fights, and all may be assured the matter of courage of his convictions is not lacking in what he fundamentally believes to be right. Dr. Johnson declared that the Board of Education, of which James B. McCahey is president, has given sympathetic understanding to all efforts to improve work of Chicago public schools.

In the course of his formal address Dr. Johnson said:

"The information in the history study will be an integral part of the curriculum, not alone for those schools whose membership is predominantly Negro, but for all the public schools of Chicago. We want it to be generally known that the Negro has given his toil, his talents, and even his life, to create and perpetuate our democratic way of life. He has been a part of every phase of American history."

At the close of the evening the Phi Delta Kappa sorority presented Dr. Johnson with an album of Marian Anderson records, to which gift the superintendent made acknowledgement feelingly.

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COURSE TO BE GIVEN IN CULTURE OF NEGRO

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Hunter Class to Study His Contributions to America

To inform students about the Negro's little-known contribution to American civilization, Hunter College will introduce a course in Negro culture next semester.

According to Miss Adelaide Cromwell, a social worker, who is the instructor, this is an opportune time for such a course, because the war is focusing attention on racial problems.

"It is especially important to suggest remedies for the economic and social difficulties of the Negro at this time, so that in the post-war world, when America is helping in the reconstruction of other nations, she will not have to be ashamed of her own unsolved problems," Miss Cromwell said.

Although indirectly the course is designed to aid in the elimination of racial discrimination, its primary purpose will be to present facts that throw light upon present-day problems through instruction, rather than sermonizing, Miss Cromwell said.

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The Negro's contribution to literature, art and music, together with the development of economic problems, will be traced from the Negro's origin in Africa, through the period of slavery, the Civil War and recanstruction, with special emphasis on the present-day problems of crime, health and labor.